

Application No. 10/796,332

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REMARKS

This is responsive to the Office Action mailed on September 28, 2006, which did not address the merits of the above-identified patent application, but set forth an election requirement under 35 U.S.C. § 121 requiring applicants to make an election of the species to be examined.

After entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 120-124, 127-134, 136-145, 147-163, 166-167, 169-171 and 173-179 will be pending, of which claims 139, 141, 142, 174 and 178 will be withdrawn from consideration.

Summary of Office Action

The Examiner alleged that the application includes claims directed to two patentably distinct species: (1) that of claims 174 and 178, which are directed to a system having at least one loop that is at least partially defined by a portion of a structure having a U-shaped cross-section; and (2) that of claims 175 and 179, in which the cross-section is open on one side.

Summary of Applicants' Reply

Applicants have withdrawn claims directed to a non-elected species.

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Applicants have amended and canceled claims to more particularly point out applicants' invention.

Applicants elect a species for immediate prosecution.

Applicants' Claim Amendments

To more particularly point out and distinctly claim that which applicants regard as their invention, applicants have amended claims 145, 152, 154, 155, 157, 163, 166, 167, 169, 173 and 177-179 and have canceled claims 164, 165, 168 and 172. Applicants' amendments do not introduce any new matter.

Applicants' Species Election

Applicants elect the species of claims 175 and 179. Applicants have withdrawn from consideration claims 174 and 178, which are directed to the non-elected species.

Claims 120-124, 127-134, 136-138, 140, 143-145, 147-163, 166-167, 169-171, 173, 175-177 and 179 are readable on the elected species.

The Examiner stated in the Office action (at p. 2) that "at least claim 120 appears to be generic." Applicants concur with the Examiner and assert that at least independent claim 120 is generic. Applicants understand that upon

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allowance of any generic claim, applicants will be entitled to consideration of claims directed to the non-elected species that include all the limitations of the generic claim. Applicants hereby expressly reserve the right to pursue claims directed to the non-elected species in one or more divisional applications.

Applicants note that claims 151-163, 166-167, 169-171, 173, 175-177 and 179, which were added on July 19, 2006, are readable on storage case species 1 and lock species 1, which applicants elected on December 23, 2004 in response to a December 8, 2004 election requirement in which the Examiner defined storage case species 1 and lock species 1.

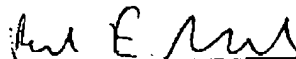
Conclusion

Applicants have amended, canceled and withdrawn claims and have elected a species for prosecution.

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A prompt and favorable action is respectfully
requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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